



More than just an art supply store..

RT! Factory offers a home for new and original art and those that appreciate it

A cozy little art supply shop has opened on the Belgiestraat, in a part of the TAO toy store building. If you blink, you might pass it by, at least from the outside, but when you open the door and step into the cool interior, a wide world of imagine opens up before you.

This new art supply shop/gallery is called RT! (pronounced ART) Factory. Shop owner Mary Boyce loves art, and her shop is a dream come true for her, inspired by artists and for artists. Many of us go through life just making a living, but now Mary is living her dream, providing supplies for all the artists of Aruba, and establishing a venue where *all* the artists of Aruba, including those that are unknown, or unrecognized, will have a place to show their work.

Mary explains that RT! Factory was one of those things that people discuss about doing one day, but in her case, she made it a reality. Encouraging her in this project were people of great talent, in her opinion, but who would be considered “amateurs.” One is Roderick Maduro, and the other, whom she speaks of with sadness, but admiration, was Detective Roy Richardson, who passed away at the beginning of this month after contracting Meningitis. Roy was a very talented artist, and one of his beautiful works holds an honored place in Mary’s shop, nestled on the shelves amongst the many supplies that she stocks for a number of mediums.

Joining Mary in this effort to showcase the artwork of many talented but fledging artists is Maria Latorre, noted portraitist, artist and teacher, who has provided the beautiful works of her young students that now adorn the walls of the RT! Factory. Maria is famed on the island not only for her work, but for training many young people that have gone on to make for themselves in the art world. Some still continue with Maria through adulthood, and the surprisingly imaginative and sometimes quite professional works of her students are now on display. The pieces show creativity and a variety of medium and subject, though the Aruban countryside, the sea, and island landmarks are always popular.

“We want this shop to be much more than an art store,” stated Mary, “we want to make a “home” for all the artists, and those that wish to be artists, in Aruba. A place where they can come to not only purchase their supplies, but also display their work, appreciate and discuss the work of others, and learn and grow creatively.” Mary hopes to line the walls of her shop with the work of many artists, and plans to recruit the better-known ones of the island to lecture and offer the wisdom of their experience. She already has the cooperation of renowned painter Edmond Teehuijt, whose work hangs in the island’s top galleries, and will speak at a time to be scheduled in late May.

“We want people to know that here they can find some beautiful pieces by local artists that have not yet made a name for themselves,” asserted Maria “the prices to purchase these works will be very reasonable, and island visitors can take home something of Aruba that is a *real* work of art, not just tourist shop fodder.” Some of the pieces, such as those by Brian Tromp or the pastels of Peter Curet and Vincent Wu truly astound one with their maturity and technique, but the ebullience and imagination of youth is ever present in their work. An example of the fine portrait work of Maria Latorre is on display, and she can be reached through the shop if one is interested in a portrait of a loved one to take home with them. A custom, original pastel costs \$50, on the average.

Mary also is open to providing unusual materials for artists, aside from all the standard painting medias she stocks such as oils, watercolors, acrylics and pastels. Easels, brushes and canvas can also be found, but Mary has already had requests for glass painting materials, and other unusual crafts, and she plans to stock supplies for a wide variety of artistic needs.

The Belgiestraat is the street where one will find the Wendy’s on the way to town. Just a few doors up and across the street you will see what appears from the outside to be a tiny little shop, but it is worth the trip, as you will find it houses some big talent.